

II. *Inscriptions from Royal Monuments*

OBELISK INSCRIPTIONS OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT

In the Temple of Karnak

Queen Hatshepsut erected four obelisks in the temple of Amun at Karnak, two of which have disappeared entirely. Of the remaining pair, the northern one still stands in its original position, while its companion has fallen. The obelisks are of pink Assuan granite.

A column of inscription was carved on each of the four sides of the shaft, and subsequently side columns with offering scenes were added. The bases on which the obelisks rested were also inscribed on all four sides. The shaft and base inscriptions of the standing obelisk (except for the later additions to the shaft) are translated below. The obelisk is 97.5 feet high and is now the tallest standing obelisk in Egypt. The base inscription is a single text of thirty-two lines which circles the base beginning on the south side.

In the inscriptions the Queen makes several emphatic points: Her devotion to her divine father Amun and to her earthly father Thutmose I. The obelisks are erected to the glory of Amun and to the memory of Thutmose I. Furthermore, she wants it correctly understood that each obelisk consists of a single monolith of granite, and that their gilding had required inordinate amounts of the finest gold. Lastly, there is the theme of her right to the throne, an ever present concern in her inscriptions: her father Amun had destined her to be king. Masculine and feminine designations of her person alternate in her pronouncements: she is the son and the daughter of Amun.

Publication: LD, III, 22-24. *Urk. IV*, 356-369.

Translation: BAR, II, §§308-319.

Shaft Inscriptions

Westside. Horus: Mighty-of-ka's; Two Ladies: Flourishing-in-years; Gold-Horus: Divine-of-diadems; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands: *Makare*. She made as her monument for her father Amun, Lord of Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands, the erecting for him of two great obelisks at the august portal, "Amun-great-in-majesty." Wrought with very fine electrum,¹ they illuminate the Two Lands like Aten.² Never was the like made since earth's beginning. Made for him by the Son of Re, *Hatshepsut Khenemet-Amun*, given life like Re forever.

Southside. Horus: Mighty-of-*ka*'s; King of Upper and Lower Egypt: *Makare*, shining image of Amun, whom he made appear as King upon the throne of Horus, in front of the holies of the palace; whom the Great Ennead nursed to be mistress of the circuit of Aten. They have endowed her with life, dominion, and joy in front of the living; the Son of Re: *Hatshepsut Khenemet-Amun*, beloved of Amen-Re, King of Gods, given life like Re forever.

Eastside. Horus: Mighty-of-*ka*'s; King of Upper and Lower Egypt: *Makare*, beloved of Amen-Re. Her majesty has recorded the name of her father on this enduring monument. Inasmuch as favor was shown to the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aakheperkare,³ by the majesty of this god, accordingly these two great obelisks were erected by her majesty for the first time. For it was said by the Lord of Gods: "Your father, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aakheperkare, gave instruction to erect obelisks, and your majesty shall multiply monuments, so as to live forever."

Northside. Horus: Mighty-of-*ka*'s; Two Ladies: Flourishing-in-years; Gold-Horus: Divine-of-diadems; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands: *Makare*. Her father Amun has established her great name upon the august *ished-tree*.⁴ Her annals are millions of years, united with life, stability, and dominion. The Son of Re, *Hatshepsut Khenemet-Amun*, beloved of Amen-Re, King of Gods, is [the builder of this beautiful monument] which she made for him on the first occurrence of the jubilee, so that she will have life forever.

Base Inscription

(1) The Living Horus: Mighty-of-*ka*'s; Two Ladies: Flourishing-in-years; Gold-Horus: Divine-of-diadems; King of Upper and Lower Egypt: *Makare*; Daughter of Re: *Hatshepsut Khenemet-Amun*, who lives forever. The daughter of Amen-Re, his beloved, his only one who came from him; shining image of the Lord-of-all; whose beauty was fashioned by the powers of On; who holds the Two Lands like her maker; whom he created so as to wear his diadems; who has forms like Khepri, who rises like Harakhti; pure egg, splendid seed, whom the Two Magicians nursed; whom Amun himself made appear upon the throne of Southern On;⁵ whom he chose as guardian of Egypt, as protector of nobles and commoners. The Horus who championed her father, the eldest of Kamutef; (5) whom Re begot so as to have beneficent offspring on earth, for the well-being of mankind. His living image, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Makare*, the fine gold of kings.

She made as her monument for her father Amun, Lord of Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands, presiding over Ipet-sut, the making for

him of two great obelisks of hard granite of the South, their upper side⁶ being of electrum, of the best of all foreign lands. Seen on both sides of the river, their rays flood the Two Lands when Aten dawns between them, as he rises in heaven's lightland.

Speech of the Queen

I have done this with a loving heart for my father Amun;
Initiated in his secret of the beginning,
Acquainted with his beneficent might,
I did not forget whatever he had ordained.
My majesty knows his divinity,
I acted under his command;
It was he who led me,
I did not plan a work without his doing.
(10) It was he who gave directions,
I did not sleep because of his temple,
I did not stray from what he commanded.
My heart was Sia⁷ before my father,
I entered into the plans of his heart.
I did not turn my back to the city of the All-Lord,
Rather did I turn my face to it.
I know that Ipet-sut is the lightland on earth,
The august hill of the beginning,
The Sacred Eye of the All-Lord,
His favored place that bears his beauty,
That gathers in his followers.

It is the King himself who says:
I declare before the folk who shall be in the future,
Who shall observe the monument I made for my father,
Who shall speak in discussion,
Who shall look to posterity—
It was when I sat in the palace,
And thought of my maker,
(15) That my heart led me to make for him
Two obelisks of electrum,
Whose summits would reach the heavens,
In the august hall of columns,
Between the two great portals of the King,
The Strong Bull, King Aakheperkare, the Horus triumphant.⁸
Now my heart turns to and fro,
In thinking what will the people say,
They who shall see my monument in after years,
And shall speak of what I have done.

Beware of saying, "I know not, I know not:
 Why has this been done?
 To fashion a mountain of gold throughout,
 Like something that just happened."
 I swear, as I am loved of Re,
 As Amun, my father, favors me,
 As my nostrils are refreshed with life and dominion,
 As I wear the white crown,
 As I appear with the red crown,
 As the Two Lords have joined (20) their portions for me,
 As I rule this land like the son of Isis,
 As I am mighty like the son of Nut,
 As Re rests in the evening bark,
 As he prevails in the morning bark,
 As he joins his two mothers in the god's ship,
 As sky endures, as his creation lasts,
 As I shall be eternal like an undying star,
 As I shall rest in life like Atum—
 So as regards these two great obelisks,
 Wrought with electrum by my majesty for my father Amun,
 In order that my name may endure in this temple,
 For eternity and everlastingness,
 They are each of one block of hard granite,
 Without seam, without joining together!

My majesty began work on them in year 15, second month of winter,
 day 1, ending in year 16, fourth month of summer, last day, totaling
 seven months of quarry work. (25) I did it for him out of affection, as a
 king for a god. It was my wish to make them for him gilded with
 electrum. "Their foil⁹ lies on their body," is what I expect people to say.
 My mouth is effective in its speech; I do not go back on my word. Hear
 ye! I gave for them of the finest electrum. I measured it by the gallon
 like sacks of grain. My majesty summoned a quantity beyond what the
 Two Lands had yet seen. The ignorant and the wise know it.

Not shall he who hears it say,
 "It is a boast," what I have said;
 Rather say, "How like her it is,
 She is devoted to her father!"
 Lo, the god knows me well,
 Amun, Lord of Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands;
 He made me rule (30) Black Land and Red Land as reward,
 No one rebels against me in all lands.

All foreign lands are my subjects,
 He placed my border at the limits of heaven,
 What Aten encircles labors for me.
 He gave it to him who came from him,
 Knowing I would rule it for him.
 I am his daughter in very truth,
 Who serves him, who knows what he ordains.
 My reward from my father is life-stability-rule,
 On the Horus throne of all the living, eternally like Re.

NOTES

1. *Dm*, "electrum," or, "fine gold," designated the gold with a high silver content which was especially prized.
2. Early in the Eighteenth Dynasty, the sun disk, *im*, achieved the status of a deity.
3. King Thutmose I, the father of Hatshepsut.
4. A tree revered as the tree of life, on whose leaves the names and years of kings were recorded by the gods. The scene of recording is often depicted in Ramesside temples. The tree is depicted as a leafy fruit-tree. Just what kind of tree the Egyptians thought of is not known.
5. Thebes was often called "Heliopolis of the South"; see H. Kees, *Orientalia*, 18 (1949), 434-436.
6. *Gs.sn hry*, "their upper side," seems to mean "their surface." In any case it does not mean "their summits." That is to say, not merely the summits of the obelisks were gilded, but rather the entire shafts.
7. The personification of the concept of understanding.
8. Thutmose I had built the two pylons now numbered IV and V, and a hypostyle hall between them. Hatshepsut removed its wooden ceiling, thus turning the hall into a colonnaded court, and erected her two obelisks in it.
9. Literally, "their side." The meaning seems to be that the gold foil forms a solid sheath.